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Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

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INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE CALLS FOR INVESTIGATION

Senators Dave Durenberger(R-MN) and Patrick Leahy(D-VT), Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, stated today that they cannot comment on the veracity or accuracy of recent press reports alleging the existence of a US covert action program relating to Libya. The Chairman and Vice Chairman emphasized their strong agreement with the President that an investigation must be made of unauthorized disclosures of classified intelligence information concerning Libya.

The two Senators said they have no indication that the Senate Committee compromised any sensitive intelligence information.

"Nevertheless, given the seriousness of this matter, we have begun an internal inquiry," the Senators said.

"That inquiry will include an examination of documents in the possession of the Committee; a review of who had access to those documents and interviews of those who had access, to determine how they handled the material," the Senators said.

The two Senators also stressed their conviction that irresponsible breaches of security by persons having the trust of the United States Government must not be allowed to undermine or distort the integrity of the intelligence oversight process. Furthermore, they stated that while vigorous action must be taken to prevent and punish such breaches of security, the fundamental purpose of intelligence, which is to serve the needs of US national security and foreign policy, must be preserved. Access to sensitive intelligence information must not be so limited that it fails to meet the needs of Executive Branch policymakers or the Congress, they said.